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President Jose Ramos-Horta (3rd from right) listens as USAID staff explains the new agricultural production technology USAID has introduced to Timor-Leste through the Lequitura Special Horticulture Area. With him are U.S. Ambassador Hans G. Klemm (4th from right) and USAID Representative Mark A. White (2nd from left). Photo: Miro Nascimento/STL

PRESIDENT JOSE RAMOS-HORTA VISITS LEQUITURA SPECIAL HORTICULTURAL AREA

AILEU--Timor-Leste President Jose Ramos-Horta visited the USAID-supported Lequitura Special Horticultural Area in Aileu on February 7, 2009 and, together with U.S. Ambassador Hans G. Klemm and USAID Representative Mark A. White, held a dialogue with the community afterwards. "I would like to thank Ambassador Klemm and USAID for introducing this project to Timor-Leste. I just visited a project like this in Malaysia, but I never dreamed that this technology was already being used by Timorese

farmers. So I am amazed to visit this site today and find that Timorese farmers are using state-of-the-art technology," President Ramos-Horta said, following his tour of the greenhouse.

U.S. Ambassador Hans G. Klemm thanked the President for the visit and the community for giving USAID the opportunity to work with them on this project. "This is an example of the work that USAID is doing in Timor-Leste. Over 70 percent of USAID programs valued at over \$123 million is targeted at agriculture and rural development, in

line with the priorities of the Government of Timor-Leste," Ambassador Klemm said.

The greenhouse facilities and other agricultural technologies comprising the Lequitura Special Horticulture Area have enabled a group of farmer households in Lequitura to produce high-quality vegetables year-round. As a result, their income has tripled since the program began.

"USAID hopes to work with the Government and the private sector in expanding the Lequitura Horticulture Area and possibly replicating it in other



A lively community dialogue was held after the President's greenhouse tour. Photo: Toby Gibson/USAID-DSP



Community elders welcoming the President to the Lequitura Special Horticultural Area. Photo: Toby Gibson.USAID-DSP

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—President Jose Ramos-Horta

places in Timor-Leste," USAID Representative Mark A. White said.

According to Private Sector Development (Dezenvolve Sétor Privadu) chief-of-party David

Dyer, these and other similar, new facilities, linked to a stronger marketing program, will enable Timorese community-based companies to dominate the market for high-end vegetables in Dili.



The Lequitura Special Horticultural Area. Photo: DSP



U.S. Ambassador Klemm and USAID Representative White with USAID Timor-Leste staff (from right: Ana Guterres, David Dyer, Angela Rodrigues, Celestina da Fonseca. Photo: Dorelyn Jose/USAID



Left: A Lequitura farmer tends to his lettuces. Right: These capsicums are just some of the high-end vegetables that are now grown in the Special Horticultural Area. Photos: Toby Gibson